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SOME UNEXPECTED SUPPORT FOR CIA

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I was in the Soviet Union for only the comparatively short time that you begin to learn it wasn't long enough to be an authority. But there were surprises.

Item: the canteen salesgirl in the Brest rail station bawling out a policeman who pleaded for a bag to carry his oranges as they spilled from the paper cornucopia — "What do you think this is, GUM?" she demanded.

Item: the surprised Foreign Ministry press functionary who gave me my blue leather accreditation folder, along with a sermon how Moscow welcomes foreign reporters as instruments of peace. Instead of the ochen' blagodarnost' he expected, he got a return sermon: those who accredit reporters also have the responsibility of making possible for them to work normally. (It took a couple of years to abolish that "literary review" known generally as censorship).

Item: the surprise birthday party for a couple of Kopekabanka Klyb (get it? — penny ante) members where I first sprang my poesy about the zavod girls of Tashkent, and the one about the young priest of Zagorsk/who considered the city one-horsk/So he bought him a loshad'/to park in the ploshad'/ Now two is par for the coursk. (There are others, including that ballad "Lenin has only got one wall, Stalin has got no wall at all . . .")

Item: the chatty cab driver who clucked at my complaint that I could buy *Pravda* and *Izvestia* at Fifth and 42nd but couldn't find the *Times* or *Trib* on sale in Moscow. He praised Eisenhower (this was just before U2) as a man of peace, said Russians looked forward to his tour.

Then, suddenly, he clamped a hand over the taxi license plaque on the dash. Half-turning, one hand on the wheel, one eye on the icy Embankment road, he said: "Forget you ever saw this number. Dulles is a fine man, too." John Foster Dulles? I asked in wonderment. "No, no, I mean Allen Dulles. You know,-CIA."

Well, you never know.